

Message Text

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PAGE 01 THE HA 01493 301734 Z

47

ACTION EUR-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 1493

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PGOV, NL

SUBJECT: NEW DUTCH GOVERNMENT: BURGER TO KEEP TRYING
BUT PERHAPS NOT FOR LONG

REF: THE HAGUE 1438

1. SUMMARY: FORMATEUR BURGER ANNOUNCED LATE MARCH 29 HE WANTS KVP LEADER ANDRIESSEN TO CLARIFY WHAT HE MEANT WHEN HE SAID THE KVP PARLIAMENTARY GROUP WILL TREAT DEN UYL GOVERNMENT IN " BUSINESSLIKE WAY". BURGER MET MOST OF MARCH 29 TH WITH LEADERS OF LEFT WING COMBINATION (DEN UYL, VAN MIERLO AND DE GAAY FORTMAN). AT CONCLUSION THEIR SESSION, THEY ANNOUNCED THEY WERE READY TO FORM CABINET DESPITE ABSENCE OF CONFESIONALS. KVP EXPECTED TO REFUSE BURGER REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION. END SUMMARY.

2. AFTER NEARLY DAY- LONG SESSION WITH LEADERS OF LEFT WING (DEN UYL, LABOR; VAN MIERLO, D 66; AND DE GAAY FORTMAN, JR. RADICALS) FORMATEUR BURGER ANNOUNCED HE WOULD SEEK CLARIFICATION FROM KVP LEADER ANDRIESSEN ON WHAT HE MEANT WHEN HE SAID KVP PARLIAMENTARY GROUP WOULD TREAT DEN UYL CABINET IN " BUSINESSLIKE WAY". THE
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 THE HA 01493 301734 Z

FORMATEUR STRONGLY REGRETTED DECISION CONFSSIONAL FLOOR LEADERS HAD TAKEN. IN COMMUNIQUE ISSUED MARCH 29, LEFT WING LEADERSHIP ALSO DEPLORED CONFSSIONALS' DECISION ESPECIALLY SINCE THEY MAINTAIN CONFSSIONALS HAVE ADMITTED THERENO REAL ALTERNATIVES TO DEN UYL CABINET. IN SESSION WITH PRESS, LABOR' S DEN UYL SAID HE FOUND IT INCOMPREHENSIBLE THAT ANDRIESSEN CLAIMED KVP WOULD TREAT A NEW GOVT IN " BUSINESSLIKE MANNER" AT SAME TIME HE WAS ADVISING KVP MEMBERS NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN DEN UYL GOVT.

3. BURGER SAW KVP MEMBER AND ARMY QUARTERMASTER GENERAL ANTHONISSEN MARCH 29. ANTHONISSEN HAS BEEN MENTIONED AS POSSIBLE KVP MINISTER OF DEFENSE IN DEN UYL GOVT. BURGER' S SPOKESMAN CLAIMED FORMATEUR WAS CONSULTING ANTHONISSEN ON GENERAL SUBJECT OF DEFENSE EXPENDITURES BUT KVP MEMBERS DECLARED BURGER TRYING FOR ANOTHER " BREAKTHROUGH" AND OFFERED ANTHONISSEN DEFENSE PORTFOLIO WHICH HE REFUSED. BURGER HAS NOT SEEN EITHER OF HIS TWO ARP CANDIDATE MINISTERS BOERSMA OR PROFESSOR DE GAAY FORTMAN, SR. THE TWO ARP MEMBERS DISCUSSED THEIR PARTICIPATION IN DEN UYL GOVT WITH ARP FLOOR LEADER AANTJES MARCH 28. THERE IS NOW WORD WHETHER THE ARP LUMINARIES WILL RENEGE ON THEIR DECISION " IN PRINCIPLE" TO PARTICIPATE IN DEN UYL GOVT.

4. SECRETARY OF KVP SECOND CHAMBER GROUP (PENDERS) TOLD EMBOFF AFTERNOON MARCH 30 KVP EXPECTS ANOTHER LETTER FROM BURGER LATER IN DAY ASKING FOR " CLARIFICATION". KVP REPLY WILL BE THAT IT UP TO DEN UYL TO CLARIFY WHAT HE WILL DO IN HIS REGERINGSVERKLARING. (SPEECH PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT AT OUTSET NEW GOVT' S TERM IN OFFICE DETAILING EVENTS SURROUNDING GOVT FORMATION AND PROGRAM PROPOSALS FOR ITS TERM IN OFFICE), I. E. WILL HE AVOID TAKING STANDS WHICH HE KNOWS KVP CANNOT ACCEPT. ANDRIESSEN WILL POINT OUT HE HAD RECEIVED NO GUARANTEES' FROM DEN UYL AND HE ALSO IN NO POSITION TO GIVE GUARANTEES. PENDERS EXPECTS BURGER WOULD RETURN MANDATE EARLY NEXT WEEK AND QUEEN WOULD APPOINT DEN UYL FORMATEUR WITH MANDATE SIMPLY " FORM A GOVT ". PENDERS NOTED, HOWEVER, THERE SOME FEELING THAT CONFSSIONAL FORMATEUR SHOULD BE APPOINTED WHO WOULD TRY EXTRA- PARLIAMENTARY GOVT WITH CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 THE HA 01493 301734 Z

LIBERALS. HE SAID VVD HAS MADE RECENT APPROACH ALONG THIS LINE TO

KVP BUT FEW MEMBERS OF KVP NOW FAVOR SUCH AN EFFORT.

5. COMMENT: IN VIEW HIS STATEMENT KVP WOULD NO LONGER PARTICIPATE IN BURGER FORMATION EFFORT, ANDRIESSEN CAN QUITE PROPERLY REFUSE CLARIFICATION BURGER IS ASKING, CLAIMING THIS WILL ONLY LEAD TO ANOTHER FRUITLESS ROUND OF LETTERS, CONSULTATIONS, ETC.

DESPITE PROTESTATIONS OF WILLINGNESS

TO GO IT ALONE, DEN UYL AND HIS COLLEAGUES ARE UNDERSTANDABLY RELUCTANT TO TRY BY THEMSELVES. ASIDE FROM INHERENT INSTABILITY SUCH A REGIME, THERE IS REAL QUESTION WHETHER LEFT WING HAS ENOUGH QUALIFIED INDIVIDUALS TO FILL ALL MINISTERIAL AND STATE SECRETARY PORTFOLIOS WITHOUT TOTALLY DENUDING PARLIAMENTARY GROUP OF EXPERTISE AND TALENT. WITH MINORITY GOVERNMENT IN POWER, LEFT WING NEEDS STRONG AND EXPERIENCED SECOND CHAMBER TEAM.

6. WITH THE FORMATION NOW IN ITS 122 ND DAY (TIEING THE PREVIOUS RECORD FOR DURATION) DUTCH POLITICAL LEADERS ARE BECOMING EVEN MORE CONSCIOUS OF DAMAGE PROTRACTED FORMATI
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